IN THE DRAWINGS

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to Fig. 12. This sheet, which includes Fig. 12, replaces the original sheet including Fig. 12.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3-11, 13-21, and 23-30 are currently pending. Claims 2, 12, and 22 have been canceled without prejudice; and Claims 1, 3-5, 11, 13-15, 21, and 23-25 have been amended by the present amendment. The changes to the claims are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.

In the outstanding Office Action, Figure 12 was objected to as not containing a legend such as "Prior Art"; Claims 1, 6, 11, and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,335,910 to Yoshizawa et al. (hereinafter "the '910 patent"); Claims 10 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the '910 patent in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,347,505 to Moritsugu et al. (hereinafter "the '505 patent"); Claims 21 and 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,274,457 to Kobayashi et al. (hereinafter "the '457 patent") in view of the '910 patent; Claim 30 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the '457 and '505 patents; and Claims 2-5, 7-9, 12-15, 17-19, 22-25, and 27-29 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.[1]

Applicants respectfully submit that the objection to the drawings is rendered moot by the present amendment to the drawings. Figure 12 has been amended to include the legend "Background Art". Accordingly, the objection to the drawings is believed to have been overcome.

Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations recited in Claim 2, which was indicated as allowable. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of

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[1] Applicants note that, while Claim 30 was rejected, Claim 27, from which Claim 30 depends, was indicated as allowable. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that amended Claim 30 should be indicated as allowable based on the indicated allowability of Claim 27.

Claim 1 (and dependent Claim 6) as anticipated by the '910 patent is rendered moot by the present amendment to Claim 1.

Claim 11 recites limitations analogous to the limitations recited in Claim 1. Moreover, Claim 11 has been amended in a manner analogous to the amendment to Claim 1. In particular, Claim 11 has been amended to incorporate the limitations of allowed Claim 12. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claim 11 (and dependent Claim 16) is rendered moot by the present amendment to Claim 11.

Independent Claim 21 has been amended to incorporate the limitations recited in allowed Claim 22. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claim 21 (and dependent Claim 26) under 35 U.S.C. § 103 is rendered moot by the present amendment to Claim 21.

Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of dependent Claims 10, 20, and 30 are rendered moot by the present amendment to the independent claims.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1, 11, and 21 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably define over any proper combination of the '910, '505, and '457 patents.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussion, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.
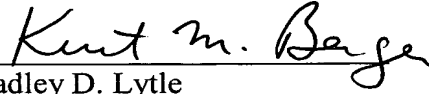
Respectfully submitted,

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